

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PONTA 00354 172015Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0354

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZOREAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC NAMED: PRESIDENT EANES NAMES GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO AS MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC FOR THE AZORES. THE NEXT STEP IN THE FORMATION OF AN AZOREAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE FOR GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO TO NAME THE PRESIDENT OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, WHO WILL BE JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL. THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL ALSO HAVE TO APPROVE THE NUMBER OF "REGIONAL SECRETARIES" BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT CAN BE APPOINTED. AS THE PPD PUTS FINAL TOUCHES ON ITS PLANS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN PPD OF PONTA DELGADA AND ANGRA ARE CAUSING SOME PROBLEMS, BUT NOT INSUPERABLE ONES. THE LOCAL PPD IS COUNTING ON CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY, WHICH SEES THE PPD GOVERNMENTS IN THE ISLANDS AS A PROVING GROUND FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' PROGRAMS. DR. SOUSA FRANCO, FORMER PPD SECRETARY OF FINANCE, WILL BE ADVISING THE REGION IN THE CRUCIAL ECONOMIC AREA. ACCORDING TO ONE PPD LEADER, THIS IS MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO FIND THE PROPER INDIVIDUAL FOR THE REGIONAL FINANCE SECRETARY SINCE THE PERSON MUST BE ABLE TO SEE THAT REGIONAL

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PONTA 00354 172015Z

INTERESTS PREDOMINATE.

2. REACTION TO GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO: THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PUBLIC COMMENT IN THE AZORES ABOUT GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO'S APPOINTMENT. DR. ALVARO MONJARDINO, PRESIDENT OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY, LAMENTED THAT CONTRARY TO A CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION, EANES HAD NOT CONSULTED THE REGION, IN THIS CASE THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTED BY ITS PRESIDENT, BEFORE NAMING FIGUEIREDO. SOME OF THE MORE LIBERAL PPD ELEMENTS ARE A LITTLE WORRIED BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL'S CONSERVATIVE REPUTATION. ONE VIEW IS THAT FIGUEIREDO, A MAN WHOM EANES TRUSTS, WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC BECAUSE THAT POSITION ENABLES HIM TO ATTEND CABINET MEETINGS WHICH DISCUSS ANYTHING CONCERNING THE REGION AND THUS PUTS HIM IN A POSITION TO KEEP EANES INFORMED. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, LTC. MIRANDA, A POPULAR AZOREAN WHO WAS COMMANDER OF THE 18TH BATTALION LOCATED IN PONTA DELGADA LAST SUMMER, IS A TRUSTED ADVISOR OF FIGUEIREDO.

3. MARIO SOARES STATEMENT ON THE AZORES: MARIO SOARES STATEMENT ON THE AZORES AND MADEIRA IN HIS PRESENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY HAS BEEN RECEIVED HERE POSITIVELY. ONE AZOREAN LEADER NOTED SOARES'S POLICY WENT BEYOND THE STATUTE OF AUTONOMY. MOST OF SOARES PRESENTATION WAS A RESTATEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON AUTONOMY, BUT IN ADDITION HE SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT THE ISLANDS SHOULD BE GIVEN THE TAX REVENUES GENERATED BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE ISLANDS BUT COLLECTED IN THE CONTINENT. THIS WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES WHOSE ELIMINATION BY THE 6TH GOVERNMENT FROM THE STATUTE OF AUTONOMY LAST APRIL CAUSED CONSIDERABLE UNHAPPINESS IN THE AZORES.

4. COMMENT: IN GENERAL THERE APPEARS TO BE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE DEVELOPING BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT AND THE AZORES. MARIO SOARES SAID THE RIGHT THINGS. THE AZOREAN VIEW POINT IS PROBABLY BEST SUMMED UP BY THE RECENT COMMENTS OF A GROUP OF AZOREAN PPD LEADERS WHO SEE EVERYONE IN LISBON - EANES, THE PS GOVERNMENT, THE PPD NATIONAL LEADERSHIP - AS USING THE AZORES TO FURTHER THEIR OWN OBJECTIVES. AS THEY SEE IT, THE CHALLENGE FOR THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ISLANDS.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PONTA 00354 172015Z

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